

SLICING HELL

listen, I forgive all you girls who used to live with me, all of you, that is, who used to go out and find another man to fuck or to snort coke with or to drink with or just talk too — or all or any of those things or maybe some things I haven't thought of ...

I now realize that oftentimes I was a dull person and also by nature not much good at verbally expressing my affection, and also most of the times none of us were interested in the same thing and/or things ...

but I must tell you that then it was different, difficult for me to forgive or understand; I remember many nights of slicing hell

just looking at the walls

or an unmade bed

or yesterday's newspapers on the floor; the moments and minutes hanging inside my head, and there were always female things about: clothes in the closet, shoes; things on the dresser and in the bathroom ...

and then there was my ego, never being able to understand how any of you could ever prefer anybody else to me ...

I didn't have a high account of humanity then, still don't ...

there were so many nights walking across a room — having it hit me, doubling over, grabbing my gut with both hands, saying, "shit, shit, shit ..."

trying to drink it away, going into cheap bars, looking, seldom finding and, when finding, getting into an act I really didn't want except out of some cheap kind of vengeance which I disliked because I was only reacting to all of you instead of doing whatever should have been naturally done.

but you know I never would have met any of you if you hadn't left somebody else or been discarded by somebody else —

so here's to the good nights among all the bad: at their best we had as much style and joy as anybody

and I forgive all of you finally for teaching
me the way:
each woman is a re-occurrence of the same
woman.
you're all nice girls and if there's a heaven
somewhere
there's a big smile there and it's all of you
smiling
as the great white shark whirls in captivity
with stunned eyes dumb, dumb stunned
eyes

THE DARLINGS

a world full of successful people's
sons
on bicycles
on the Hollywood Riviera
at 3:11 P.M.
on a Tuesday afternoon ...

this is what some of the armies
died to save
this is what many of the ladies
desire:
these stuffed fractions of
beings
pedalling along
or stopping to chat while
still seated upon their mounts
gentle breezes sifting across
their undisturbed faces ...

I understand very little of this
except maybe the armies killed the
wrong people
but they usually do:
they always think the enemy is
those they are directed against
instead of those who
direct them:
the fathers of the
darlings.

— Charles Bukowski

San Pedro CA